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Operation Palette

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AN EXHIBITION OF ORIGINAL PAINTINGS BY OFFICIAL U. S. NAVY COMBAT ARTISTS

Presented by the Department of the Navy

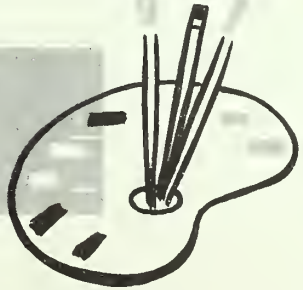
OPERATION PALETTE is brought to your community through the cooperation of the Navy Department, the Combat Art Section of the Office of Information, local Naval Reserve organizations, and community-conscious citizens.

Operation Palette

Foreword

While United States industry and the military forces were slowly building up the great American defense organization during the dark months of 1941, a small group of naval officers and interested civilians began to make plans to bring into being a Navy official art collection. An office was to be formed under the Chief of Information, then the Navy's Director of Public Relations.

Following the outbreak of hostilities at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, the Navy Department commissioned a group of professional artists to form the nucleus of the present Combat Art Section. Commander Griffith Bailey Coale, a muralist and landscape painter from New York, was one of the first to report aboard and to spend considerable time with the organization of the section.



As the war spread further and further and the months wore on into 1942, artists Murray, Draper, Jamieson and others reported for duty and were sent to the various theaters of action. As the tide changed, The Battle of the Atlantic became an Allied offensive, and Japan was checked in the Pacific. There were artists in every part of the world depicting the experiences and feelings of the men who stormed the tropic beaches or fought half frozen in rigorous climates.

The paintings sent back to the Navy Department were of far greater significance than mere pictorial reporting. They have been exhibited throughout the nation and have won widespread acclaim from the country's foremost art critics. The paintings project the combined daring and courage of the artists on their assignments as well as their creative skills.

During postwar years, these paintings were gathered together to form the present Navy exhibition OPERATION PALETTE, which has traversed the United States continually since its initial tour in 1946. The complete exhibition returns annually to the Navy Department in Washington, D. C., where new additions to it are incorporated to bring the show up to date.

Since the Korean War, the paintings of two new artists who were assigned to action zones in Korea have been included. The still later work of a combat artist assigned to the

Atlantic and Mediterranean areas, covering various operations and maneuvers with NATO countries, has also been added, as has a series of paintings of Seventh Fleet operations in the China Seas.

OPERATION PALETTE contains one hundred or more carefully selected paintings representing some of the best works of the Navy's combat artists. These works are presented throughout the United States by the Navy Department, under the auspices of the Combat Art Section, Office of Information, Main Navy Building, Washington 25, D. C.

It will be noted that the Navy's artists have held many different officer ranks and enlisted ratings. Because of the small size of the group, the service has not classified artists as it has other specialists. Oftentimes the artist was discovered already in the Navy and performing another kind of duty, the designation of which he carried throughout his military career. However, all of the group were accorded the title of official combat artist.

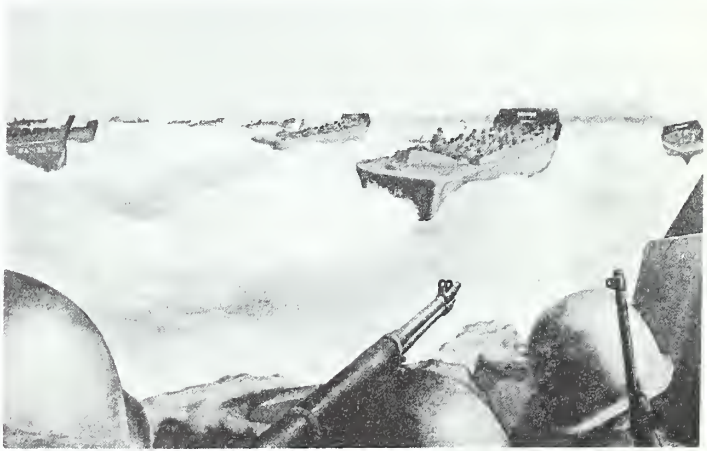
The future disposition of these paintings and hundreds of other oils, water colors and drawings now in the Navy collection, eventually will become a part of a proposed National War Museum collection in Washington, D. C.

STANDISH BACKUS, JR

Commander, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

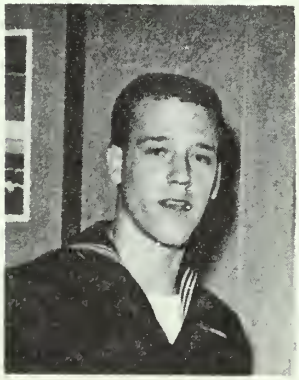
A graduate of Princeton University with a degree in Art and Arehitecture, Commander Backus later studied painting and art in Europe. When he reported for active duty with the Navy early in 1941, he became a specialist in Net and Boom Defenses; in May 1945 he was assigned to cover naval operations in the Pacific. Arriving in Japan with the Fourth Marine Regiment, he participated in the entry into Tokyo Bay and witnessed the surrender ceremonies aboard USS MISSOURI on September 2, 1945. In 1955–56 he returned to duty at his own request to go with Admiral Byrd to the Antarctic. In civil life he is engaged in illustrating, painting, and teaching at his home in Santa Barbara, California.



"The First Wave on Japan"—1945 ▲

◀ " '76' ALLEY"—*Korea—1953*

After graduating from the New Hampton Preparatory School and attending the George Vesper Art School in Boston, Massachusetts, Journalist-seaman Cabot later became staff member of the Boston Museum of Science. His naval career began shortly after the start of the Korean War. Completing his recruit training, he was assigned to USS PRINCETON, where he recorded action of Carrier Task Force 77. He frequently flew with pilots on their missions to achieve the first hand knowledge which makes his paintings realistic. After accompanying the First Marine Division through the bitter winter above the 38th Parallel, he returned to Tokyo to finish his sketches made in Korea. He resumed life as a civilian in 1954.



HUGH CABOT

Journalist-Seaman, USN

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

"Hvalfjordur, Iceland"—1941

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Commander Coale spent three years studying art in Munich, Paris, Italy and Spain. Subsequent to his return to the United States and residenee in New York City, he became nationally known through his many famous murals and paintings. In August 1941 he was commissioned in the U. S. Naval Rèserve with the rank of Licutenant Commander and became the Navy's first combat artist on active duty. He was then assigned to the far-flung theaters of the war. Life magazine reproduced his "North Atlantic Patrol" series, later published in book form. He died unexpectedly in 1950.

GRIFFITH BAILEY COALE

Commander, USNR

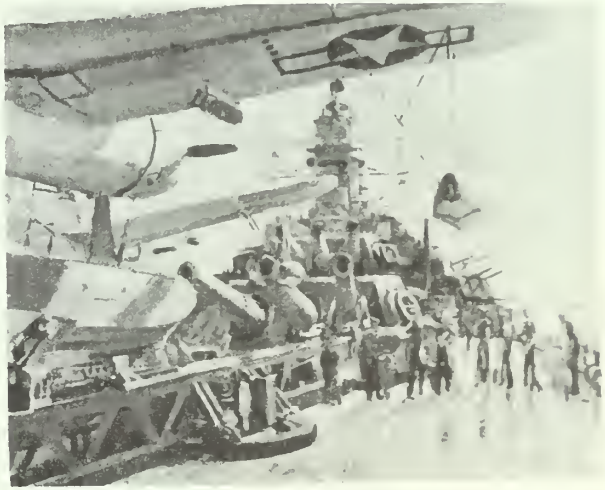
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

WILLIAM FRANKLIN DRAPER

Lieutenant Commander, USNR

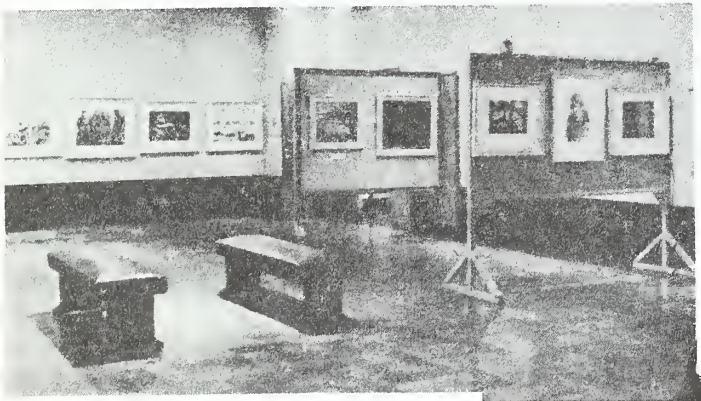
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

Born in Hopedale, Massachusetts, Lieutenant Commander Draper attended the National Academy of Design and the Cope Art School in Massachusetts and also studied in France and Spain. Commissioned early in 1942, he did a series of paintings during his coverage of the Aleutians, Bougainville and the Marianas campaigns which later appeared in color reproductions in the National Geographic Magazine. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his meritorious work as a combat artist while painting in the Aleutians and under enemy attack in the South Pacific. He is now a member of Portraits, Incorporated of New York, where he is actively engaged in portrait painting.



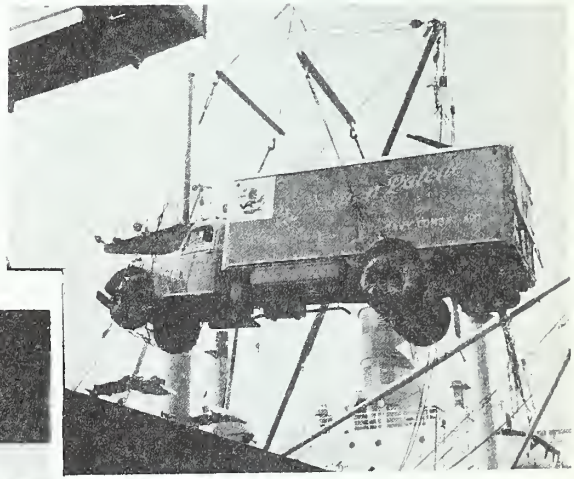
"Sweepers, Man Your Brooms"—Bougainville—1943

Operation Palette at . . .



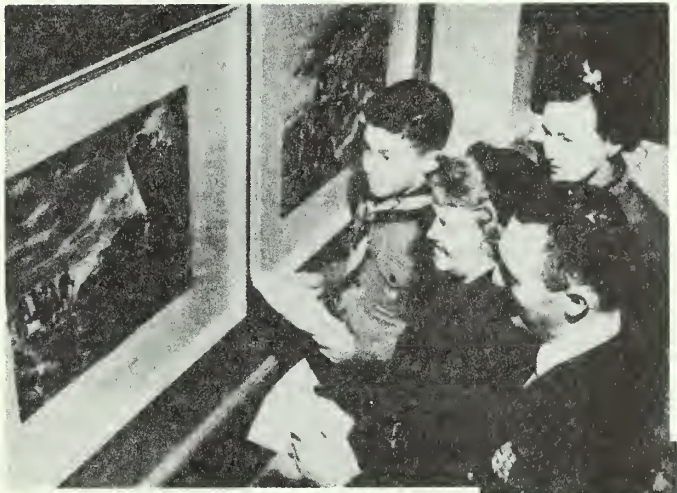
Rochester, New York

Ogden, Utah



En Route to Honolulu, Hawaii

Sacramento, California



Seattle, Washington

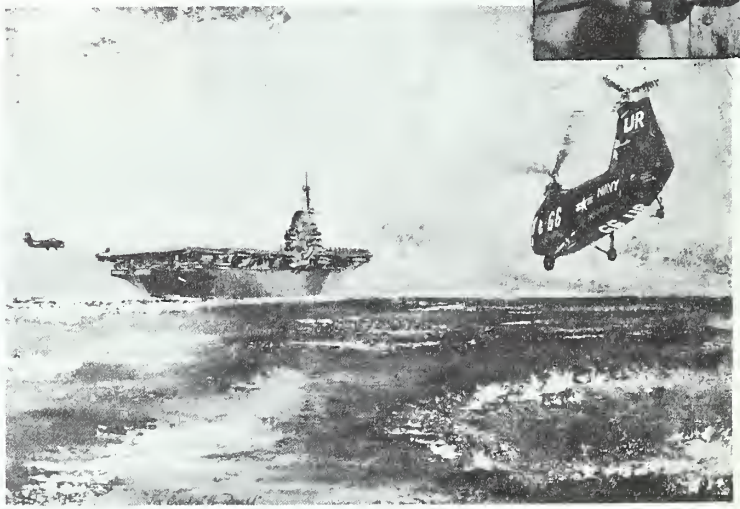
Los Angeles, California

RICHARD A. GENDERS

Chief Draftsman-Illustrator, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A graduate of the John Herron Art Institute of Indianapolis, Chief Genders is a native of London. A veteran of World War II, he served in the North African area and in the South Pacific. Prior to his return to active duty and assignment as a combat artist, he conducted a studio school and was actively engaged in landscape painting and exhibiting in national art shows. He has introduced a gouache technique in his series of U. S. Sixth Fleet paintings. His paintings of NATO exercises and maneuvers dramatically portray the role of the high-speed carrier and its jet planes in modern warfare. He returned to civil life in 1955 after executing a series on the Seventh Fleet in the Far East.



"The Angel of the RANDOLPH"—Mediterranean—1954

A native of Massachusetts, Photographer First Class Hahn acquired his art training in Boston. An Army veteran of World War II, he enlisted in the Naval Reserve and was called to active duty in 1950. He was assigned to the carrier USS BOXER until his spare time painting became recognized and he was subsequently assigned as an official combat artist. During his tour of duty with the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, he executed over 100 paintings showing the Navy ashore and afloat. He received the Navy Commendation for his work and is now an art director in Los Angeles, California.

"Vice Admiral Joy"—Korea—1953 ▲

HERBERT C. HAHN

Photographer First Class, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

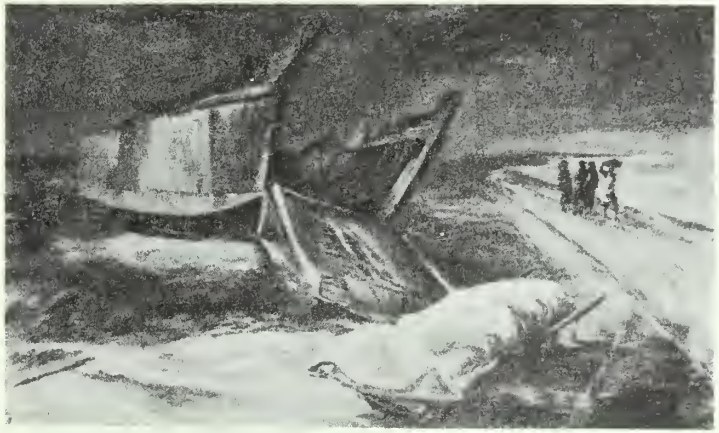
One of the country's foremost watercolor artists, Lieutenant Jamieson was born in Kensington, Maryland, and attended the Abbott School of Fine and Commercial Arts and the Corcoran Art School in Washington, D. C. Having already established himself with many noted commissions, he began his duty in 1942 as an official combat artist depicting the Navy in its many operations from the North African campaign to the South Pacific. During the war he was awarded the Bronze Star medal. His combat paintings have been extensively reproduced by Life, Fortune, and other national publications. Twice awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Award of Merit by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Mr. Jamieson is now painting in his studio near Washington, D. C.

MITCHELL JAMIESON

Lieutenant, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

"The Village of Horrified Trees"—Okinawa—1945 ▲



EDWARD MILLMAN

Lieutenant, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

◀ *"Death of a Coxswain and His Boat"—Philippines—1945*

A native of Chicago, Lieutenant Millman attended the Art Institute of Chicago and later became chief illustrator on the art staff of the Chicago Evening American. His interest in the frescoes of Diego Rivera led him South to further his art education in Mexico. He has been awarded a post-service Guggenheim Fellowship for his paintings that have been exhibited in leading American museums and art galleries. Commissioned by the Navy in 1943, Lieutenant Millman saw duty as a combat artist in the South Pacific theater of operations.

ALBERT K. MURRAY

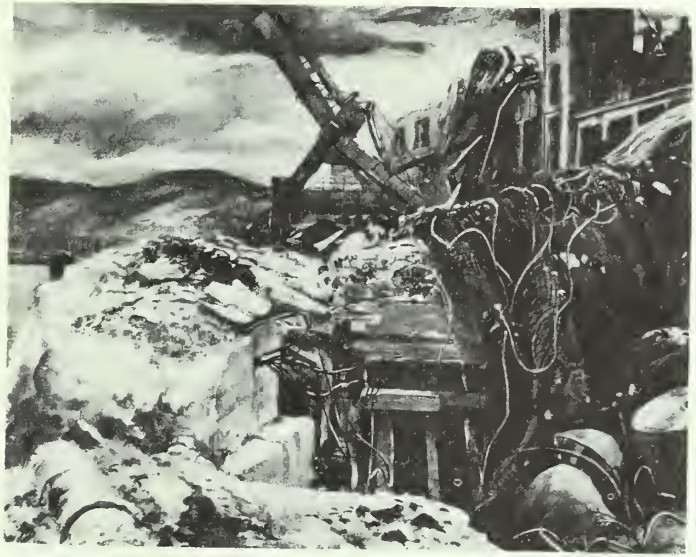
Commander, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

Upon graduating cum laude from the College of Fine Arts, Syracuse University, Commander Murray, a native of Emporia, Kansas, continued his studies both in the United States and Europe. Before he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Naval Reserve in March, 1942, he was already a well-known portrait painter. Assigned to the Combat Art Section, his first duty was to execute a series of portraits of the Navy's General Board, which were the first of his many now famous military portraits. Attached to the Fourth Fleet, South Atlantic, and then the Eighth Fleet, North African waters, he returned with a large collection of oils, many of which are in OPERATION PALETTE. Today Mr. Murray is one of the country's leading portrait painters. His home is in White Plains, New York.

"A Coxswain"

Southern France—1945



"Wreckage in Port of Cherbourg"—France—1944 ▲

A student of the Pratt Institute of New York and later a staff member of a popular magazine, Specialist First Class Russo is a native of Atlantic City, New Jersey. His paintings have been widely exhibited in eastern cities of the United States. He enlisted in the Naval Reserve in October, 1942 and began doing layouts and illustrations for Navy publications. He later painted the manifold activities of the African and Sicilian operations and was assigned duty aboard a landing craft so that he might graphically capture the events of D-Day in the invasion of France. Mr. Russo was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his combat art work.

ALEXANDER P. RUSSO

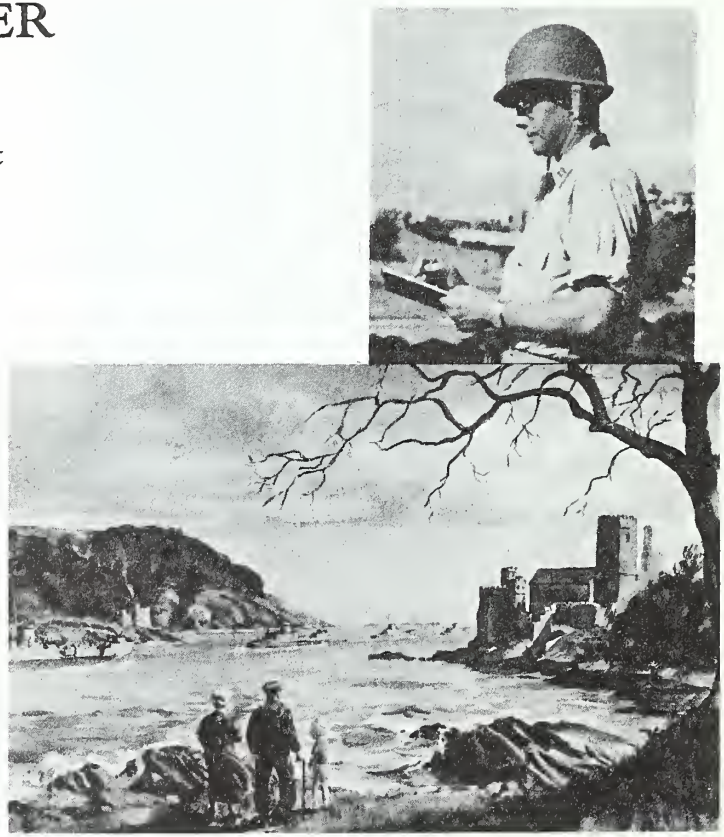
Specialist First Class, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

DWIGHT C. SHEPLER

Commander, USNR

Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist



Born in Everett, Massachusetts, a graduate of Williams College, he became a member of the American Artists' Group and the American Artists Professional League. Commissioned in May, 1942, Commander Shepler first was assigned to a destroyer on Pacific convoy duty. From the mud of Guadalcanal, through the years of the material build-up in England, to the memorable D-Day on the French coast, he painted and recorded the Navy's war. His final work for the Navy was the execution of two large murals at the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. He is now active and widely recognized in art circles as a painter of many talents and great skill.

"The Coast Inhabitants Wondered"—England—1944

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NOTES

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